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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, REFERENDUM, NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, AMR MUSA, INSURGENCY;

BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution, Referendum, National Reconciliation, Amr Musa, and the Insurgency were the major editorial themes of the daily newspapers on October 26, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

- [1A.](#) "Following the Approval of the Constitution" (Al-Mada, independent, no-bias, published this front-page unattributed editorial)

"Finally, the majority of people approved the first Iraqi constitution presented to a public referendum for the first time in the history of Iraq. Excluding the talk about the good and the bad in this constitution, the most important thing now is how to deal with the period following the constitution's approval.

"The latest amendment provided a chance to make some changes to the approved constitution, which is an opportunity for everybody to prepare for the December election-to win a seat in the new representative council in order to become more politically active and contribute to amendments by certain factions.

"It was impossible to draft a constitution that satisfies all Iraqi interest groups. This caused reservations among certain groups who objected to specific articles they felt opposed their beliefs. Certainly, as is the case throughout the world, the constitution will endure a process of revision that satisfies present concerns. The most important thing in the referendum process is people's beliefs in expressing their opinion through ballot boxes. This process is furthering our democratic education and lessening the influence of political parties.

"Therefore, all political parties (within the government and the opposition) should respect the people's democracy and invest in it to establish the kind of democracy everyone can be proud of."

- [1B.](#) "A Wave of Violence Following a Relative Lull" (Al-Ittihad, affiliated with the PUK led by Jalal Talabani, published this page-three editorial by Abdul Hadi Mahdi)

"There has been a relative lull since referendum day and the Secretary General of the Arab League's visit but this quiet

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is deliberate and not the first time that silence is followed by violence.

"On the evening of October 24, explosions occurred in the capital Baghdad and put the security forces in front of questions about how such violations are allowed to occur. What happened in Al-Firdus Square does not correlate with announced statements about the development of abilities and control of our security forces.

"Alertness and preparedness must always be the slogan for the security forces. The glory of victory should not lead to unexpected disaster. A few days of calm in a month does not mean that attackers have given up and quit. On the contrary, attention should be focused during these periods because enemies are waiting for inattention to seize the initiative

in order to attack and cause more victims.

"According to observers, the attack is a message from gunmen that they dismiss the Arab League's initiative to hold a conference on national reconciliation. Observers predict such reconciliation will enhance security and save the country from violence. We want the police and army to be more responsible during this stage--for the sake of Iraq and Iraqis."

C. "The Lock and the Key"

(Al-Fourat, independent, anti-coalition published this back-page editorial by Dawoud Al-Farhan)

"The Arab media has unanimously agreed that Amr Musa, Secretary General of the Arab League, is a `political

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magician.' In a precise mission he gathered together disparate Iraqi political and national elements which, hitherto, refused to acknowledge his initiative. I would like to remind my readers of some of the comments characterizing Amr Musa. The Saudi writer Abdul Rahman Al-Rashid wrote, 'A magical personality capable of managing difficult and contradictory assignments and succeeding in resolving them all. If he visits Iraqi more often he will accomplish great achievements-more than any Arab summit can achieve.'

"The Lebanese journalist, Abdul Wahab Badrkhan, wrote, 'Without the strong American persuasion for the vital role of the Arab League, Amr Musa would not be in Baghdad. This is the beginning of more difficulties ahead because the enemies of reconciliation are many.'

"An Egyptian writer praised Amr Musa for his braveness, consistency and presence in Baghdad under such bad security circumstance. He added that Musa deserves double congratulations for his successful start in persuading some Iraqi national elements who have certain doubts about the Secretary General's impartiality.

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"This important achievement makes us optimistic about the future of our Iraq, it means that all Iraqi political and national elements (despite different ambitions and goals, and in spite of a military occupation in Iraq) have common hopes for Iraq. However, the Secretary General should be aware that the Iraqi political platforms he encountered in Baghdad, Najaf, Arbil, and Sulaymaniyah may change before the preliminary meeting in Cairo. Iraqis now have a million political leaders who think we should listen to and obey them. We recognize that Amr Musa managed to sidestep the difficulties in his mission, such as impossible conditions requested by some religious factions and political parties-he declared that all should draw a decisive line between violence and reconciliation in Iraq.

"The conspiracy theories of a few Iraqi government officials were dispelled when Musa met with the grand Ayatollah in Najaf, Kurdish leaders in the North, the Muslim Scholars' Association, the National Dialogue Council, Dr. Iyad Allawi and other political and independent Iraqi figures. He listened to all points of view but nevertheless, the Al-Sadr group boycotted their meetings with him under the demand that the League condemn violence in Iraq-but we are aware of their opportunism in the political process.

"I am not defending the Arab League by saying that they condemned violence against innocent Iraqis several times. Indeed I have levied blame on the Arab League for their hazy attitude opposing military operations in the provinces that reject the occupation of Iraq. We praised Musa when he refused to reside in the Green Zone, rejected a proposed American security detail, and refused to land his plane in an American military base.

The question is, since Musa visited Baghdad, Najaf, Arbil and Sulaymaniyah, why didn't he visit Fallujah, Ramadi, and Samara where he could find the key to unlock the problem."

D. "Congratulations to All for the Permanent Constitution"

(Al-Bayyan - affiliated with Ad-Dawa (led by Al-Ja'fari), no bias, published this front-page unattributed editorial)

"Iraq has entered a new stage by ratifying the permanent constitution in a fair and democratic manner, witnessed by all. Iraqi citizens voted to express their opinions in all governorates, some voted yes and others no. Regardless of the outcome, the important thing is participation which underscores a belief in the political process.

"Accordingly, the ratification was a successful demonstration of the democratic process. It illustrated Iraqi interest in the constitution, which preserves the rights and freedom of all sects and ensures the peaceful transfer of power through citizen involvement, the

decentralization of power, and an end to discrimination. The day the constitution was ratified was a pleasant occasion for Iraqis and will remain so for coming generations because it represents a guarantee for the future.

"This accomplishment by the Iraqi people was a result of continued and faithful efforts on behalf of the TNA, political parties, the Iraqi government, and the marje'ia [Shi'a religious authorities] who assured the broad participation of all Iraqis regardless of their sects or beliefs.

"So, we would like to congratulate our people for this basic and blessed step, which raised the name of Iraq to the level of civilized countries which have constitutions that represent the wishes of the people. Congratulations to all who participated regardless of their votes, because it was important for the progress, prosperity and development of Iraq."

1E. "Curtail Your Happiness and Be Patient about Your Suffering"
(Al-Mashriq- independent, anti-coalition, Sufi-leaning, published this front-page editorial by Dr. Hamid Abdullah)

"There is no difference between Iraqis who voted for or against the constitution, the important thing is that Iraqis achieve victory toward violence. Iraqis must be victorious against factions trying to weaken and divide them by killing the smiles of their children, destroying schools, closing factories, transforming streets into venues for battle, and forcing citizens to hide in their houses to avoid security cordons, robbery, beheadings and assassinations.

"We have lived through the whole stage of the political process and concluded that our conditions have only worsened. The Governing Council was formed and then worked under the supervision of the decent guy (Paul Bremer) but as soon as members received their shares from a divided Iraq they began to disclose sensitive issues and criticized Bremer who answered them quietly, explaining to them that he gave them their shares of Iraq's oil revenues and funds meant for the reconstruction of Iraq. Then he took his share and left Iraq!

"Later the Iraqi Interim Government was formed but the bloodshed proliferated and violence increased. Then the elections were held and only some participated while others boycotted-some political blocs won and others lost, but life has deteriorated and Iraq has begun to regress. The elected Transitional National Government was formed but Iraq's slide backwards accelerated. Frankly, it looks to be a race--but one run backwards.

"And now, the constitution has passed and those who voted for it won while those who voted against it lost. The Iraqi people have become more scared and anxious than even during the period that preceded the referendum. So, should we be pleased or pray to God to protect us from the success of the constitution? Following the other successes, bad luck and danger has befallen Iraqis more than if they had failed.

"Iraqis who were pleased with their success should check their happiness. Iraqis who were disturbed by this success should be more patient-things aren't stable and nothing can continue forever. We pray to God to improve our conditions according to what he wants-not what we want."

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